**European Forestry Commission**

**Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds**



**GOVERNANCE and STRATEGY**

# Background & History

Soil conservation, water management, restoration of degraded lands and torrent-control in upland watersheds are important challenges which require the collaboration of all the actors involved in the rational utilization of soil and water resources. In recognition of these facts, the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC), on the occasion of its 3rd session held on September 1st, 1950, examined issues related to soil rehabilitation and conservation through the rational use of water resources within basins. During this meeting the “Working Party on Torrent Control, Protection from Avalanches and Watershed Management” was established. In the following year, FAO was asked to provide support to this new Working Party (WP). The first session of the WP was held in 1952 in Nancy. Since then, sessions have been held biannually. In 1970, the technical body was renamed into “Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds” (WP-MMW). Members of the WP are officially designated by their respective governments. The role of forests and trees in the management of mountain watersheds has always been a core concern of the activities of the WP-MMW.

The WP is continuously confronted with emerging issues of global importance and needs to keep an active reflection alive on the relevance and the impact of its activities. Over more than five decades of its existence, the core concerns of the WP have progressively evolved – but its “modus operandi” and the mandate remained unchanged since 1970. On the other hand, a number of new processes and institutional mechanisms of relevance to the WP-MMW have developed in Europe in recent years and the “institutional landscape” has become more complex. Finally, the human and financial resources of countries are more and more stretched by the large number of institutional processes and mechanisms they have to service. As a result, the 35th session of the EFC (April 2010, Lisbon) requested the Secretariat of the WP-MMW to implement a review of its mandate and “modus operandi” and to come up with recommendations for the future direction of the WP-MMW. The review was to put special attention into identifying the specific niche of the WP and to evidence elements of particular importance for the member countries. The review was carried out in the course of 2011, after which its recommendations went through a number of consultation processes. The final results of the review were presented to the 37th session of the EFC in December 2013 in Rovaniemi. The commission endorsed the recommendations of the review and gave green light to their implementation. This Governance and Strategy Paper was developed based on the decisions in Rovaniemi and considers the recommendations of the review.

# Vision, Mission & Strategy

**Vision**

The vision of the WP-MMW is to promote sustainable development in mountain watersheds with a view to enhance resilience to climate change and natural disasters and to ensure the long-term provision of environmental services by watersheds for both upstream and downstream areas.

**Mission**

The WP-MMW serves the EFC and its member countries as advisory body. Its mission is to:

* bring together member countries of the EFC in order to raise awareness, increase knowledge, enhance capacities, assess and disseminate state-of-the-art knowledge and best practices on the management of mountain watersheds
* fill knowledge gaps and provide policy advice regarding an integrated approach to sustainable mountain development and conservation, watershed management and forest hydrology in Europe and their linkages to the Green Economy;
* pay particular attention to the creation of bridges between science and practice and the consideration of urgent concerns such as climate change impacts, disaster risk management (torrent and avalanche control, risk zoning and mapping, early warning systems etc.), the valuation of watershed ecosystem services and the promotion of Green Economy;
* improve the livelihood systems in mountain areas.

**Strategy**

The topics – addressed by the WP-MMW – are cross-cutting and require inter-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder approaches, a long term vision and commitment as well as the crossing of thematic and administrative boundaries. The target audience for the outputs produced by the WP-MMW are government technicians, foresters, farmers, local authorities and representatives of the private sector. Different needs and priorities across the EFC region are taken into consideration. While the activities of the WP-MMW focus on the EFC region, contacts and exchange with other areas are encouraged, especially with Central Asian countries and with member countries of Silva-Mediterranea.

# Institutional Framework

The WP-MMW is a country driven technical body under the umbrella of the EFC. Each EFC member country is also a member of the WP-MMW. Member countries officially designate a “focal point” from a related Government-agency, (e.g.: from the forestry administration or from a research institution) who represents the country in the activities of the WP-MMW. EFC member countries are encouraged to engage in the shaping of the work programme of the WP-MMW and to support its activities with technical expertise as well as human and/or financial resources. The WP-MMW has the following legal and institutional features:

* In order to fulfil the mission of the WP-MMW, the technical activities of the WP-MMW are implemented by thematic or regional Working Groups (WGs). This allows the WP-MMW to respond to different emerging needs and priorities within the European region (see section IV C);
* The WP-MMW collaborates with countries of the UNECE and the Mediterranean region, which are not members of the EFC. Furthermore, it cooperates with Universities, research institutes, NGOs and developing agencies. Finally, it establishes partnerships with relevant international organisations and processes such as the EU, Alpine Convention, Forest Europe, UNECE Water Convention, EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), INTERPRAEVENT, EUROMONTANA, International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), UNESCO-IHP-HELP, Mountain Partnership, Mediterranean Regional Office of the European Forest Institute (EFIMED), EFI-MOUNTFOR, International Consortium on Landslides (ICL), UN Water, North European Regional Office of the European Forest Institute (EFINORD), International Forestry Students Association (IFSA), etc.;
* The WP-MMW is a technical body under the EFC and is integrated into the joint work plan of UNECE/FAO;
* The WP-MMW and the Steering Committee are chaired always for two years by the host country of the last session;
* The Secretariat of the WP-MMW is hosted by FAO;

# Governance

## Steering Committee (SC)

The SC provides programmatic orientation to the WP-MMW and serves as a representative body of its members. Whenever possible, the SC will make decisions on the basis of consensus. The SC works according to the following features:

* The SC approves the overall agenda of the WP-MMW as well as the work plans of the WGs;
* The SC is composed of: a) members of the host countries of the last two sessions, b) member of the host country of the next session, c) member of each WG;
* The SC meets whenever there is a need to discuss a particular issue, but at least once a year;
* FAO, as the host organisation of the Secretariat, convenes to the SC meetings;
* Representatives of other EFC countries, non-EFC countries and partner organizations can participate in the SC meetings as observers or resource institutions as appropriate for specific agenda items;
* The SC is chaired by the chairperson of the WP.

## WP-MMW Secretariat

FAO hosts the Secretariat of the WP-MMW and provides logistical support. FAO assigns the role of Secretary of the WP-MMW to one of its professional staff members. The Secretariat of the WP-MMW works according to the following features:

* The Secretariat provides support and services to the members and the SC of the WP-MMW, fosters synergies and complementarities, facilitates collaboration among members and partners (including non EFC member countries, particularly in Central Asia and the Mediterranean region) and ensures coherence in WP-MMW efforts;
* The Secretariat facilitates communication, exchange of information, preparation and dissemination of information products (session reports, newsletter, regular update of the web-site);
* The Secretariat provides logistical and coordination support to the thematic and regional WGs and monitors the implementation of their work plans;
* The Secretariat invites countries and partners to the bi-annual sessions of the WP-MMW. It also invites members to the SC meetings;
* WP-MMW member countries are encouraged to second technical staff to the Secretariat in order to support the implementation of its work programme and to expose national experts to an international work environment;
* If possible, the Secretary of the WP-MMW participates in the Bureau Meetings of the EFC.

## Working Groups

Thematic or regional WGs form the main implementation mechanism to fulfil the mission of the WP-MMW and to satisfy the different needs and priorities within the European region. The main features of the WGs are:

* WGs are proposed by at least two member countries, which invite interested partners (both member countries and institutions) to join according to their interest and priorities;
* WGs are coordinated by leading countries;
* WGs operate according to precise ToRs and clearly defined work plans, outputs and expected results; these are reported to the secretary for documentation and follow up during SC-meetings and biannual sessions
* WGs are responsible for resource mobilisation for their activities;
* WGs engage in enhancing the collaboration and intensification of exchange of experiences and lessons learnt to partners beyond the EFC countries (e.g. Central Asia, Mediterranean region, other relevant Institutions);
* Typical outputs and activities of WGs are publications on relevant topics, policy advice, capacity development and research programs;
* Depending on the objectives and tasks, WGs may be active for a limited duration;
* EFC member countries can participate in several WGs;
* Each WG nominates its delegate to participate in the SC of the WP-MMW.

## Biannual Sessions

The WP-MMW holds its sessions on a biannual basis, in the same year of the session of the EFC. Ideally, the WP-MMW session is held before the EFC session in order to allow for a timely preparation of the report and the presentation of the key outcomes of the meeting to the EFC session. Each session is hosted by a member country which takes the responsibility for its organisation. The structure of the sessions of the WP-MMW includes the following components:

* Technical Seminar on the overall topic which has been selected for the session;
* Field excursion related to watershed management and/or relevant topics of the WGs.
* Business session:
  + Progress reports from the WGs (achievements, problems, next steps, etc.);
  + Presentation of national reports;
  + Presentation of observer reports;
  + Report on inter-sessional activities by the Secretariat and the SC;
  + Deliberation on emerging issues (future direction of the WP-MMW, participation by member countries, etc.);
  + Communication;
  + Elections.

## Reporting and communication

The WP-MMW is a technical body under the EFC. The WGs form the main implementation mechanism to fulfil the mission of the WP-MMW. Accordingly, the following reporting mechanisms have been established:

* The Working Groups report to the Steering Committee of the WP-MMW at least twice a year about their activities and the progress in the implementation of the work programme;
* The Secretariat reports on a regular basis to the Steering Committee of the WP-MMW on its activities;
* The Secretariat of the WP-MMW reports once or twice a year to the members of the joint EFC/COFFI Bureau about the progress in the implementation of the work programme of the WP-MMW;
* Through its Secretariat, the WP-MMW reports to the biannual sessions of the EFC on the progress in the implementation of the work programme and on the main conclusions of its own biannual session.
* The Newsletter and the Website will form the pillars of the communication of the WP-MMW:
  + TheNewsletterplays an important role in the spread of information. In fact, the Newsletter not only includes news regarding forest and watershed management, but also information on member countries. In addition, the Newsletter is closely linked to the WEB-site which is updated on a regular basis;
  + The WEB-site of the WP-MMW represents a very important asset. It is part of the FAO-homepage (Forestry/Forest and environment/Watershed Management and Mountains). **Annex 1: communication strategy**

The communication strategy is being developed based on the new mandate and modus operandi of the WP-MMW. The different components of the strategy should offer a platform for regular information exchange among EFC member countries and other interested partners.

* The revised WEB-site is likely to feature the following elements:
  + History and review of the WP-MMW
  + SC meetings and the reports
  + Sessions of the WP-MMW (archive, recent reports; time-strategy)
  + Newsletter
  + Country information
  + Related events (reports and dates)
  + WG1 (Forest & Water)
  + WG2 (Hazards and Disaster Risk Management)
  + Governance and Strategy Paper of the WP-MMW
  + Members EFC, WP-MMW, SC, WGs